CLAY GEERDES **COMIX WAVE** 138
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THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF SUPER RABBIT

SUPER RABBIT COMICS. New York: Timely, September 20, 1945. (date of filing of copyright). Overstreet says Fall of 1944 to November of 1948. 14 issues. Waffles, a poor little shoeshine **rabbit** finds a magic ring and when he rubs it he becomes **Super Rabbit**. This comic parodied the excesses of Jerry Siegel and Joe Schuster's **SUPERMAN** (Orig. 1932, first DC story in **ACTION 1**, June, 1938, still published in 1993). **SUPER RABBIT** appeared for the first time in **COMEDY COMICS 14** (New York: Timely, March, 1943). An imitation of **HOPPY, THE MARVEL BUNNY**, he was the third funny animal super hero and was given his own title in 1944. SR was styled after Disney's Max Hare [1935] via Bugs Bunny, who was streamlined by animator Robert McKimson. Super **Rabbit** appeared in **ALL SURPRISE COMICS, COMIC CAPERS, ANIMATED MOVIE TUNES, IDEAL COMICS, IT'S A DUCK'S LIFE, MOVIE TUNES**, and **WISCO** [See Overstreet 22, p. 408.]. The animators at Warner's Termite Terrace swiped him and made a Bugs Bunny **Super Rabbit** cartoon which was released April 3, 1943. He was the immediate model for **KID CARROTS** [1953], **THUNDERBUNNY** (1960) and **CAPTAIN CARROT** (1982). As a quasi-superhero, Bucky O'Hare owes SR a nod.

This Spring marks the fiftieth anniversary of the rabbit of steel and one can only wonder at the lack of attention given the famous Hare of Tomorrow. No covers on **TCJ** and **CBG**. No guest shots on Oprah, Donahue, Arsenio, or Letterman. No profile in **PEOPLE**. Fact is, Super Rabbit was a funny strip and many of the stories were quite well done. In **ALL SURPRISE 7**, there is a gas shortage due to the war and a nefarious group of cab company crooks kidnaps little kids to peddle the cabs around. SR lets himself be snatched by the bad guys so he can find their hideout and get the details of the scam then he breaks up the gang and turns the crooks over to the cops. 1945 was one of his best years.

Super Rabbit was a general parody of superheroism as it existed in 1945. The character wore the cavalier boots swiped by C. C. Beck from D'Artagnan for Captain Marvel. Instead of the little white gloves favored by Mickey Mouse and Disney's stable of characters, SR wore a pair of large orange gloves. Unlike most of his cunicular peers, he was tailless in most of his adventures. His pullover was normally light blue while his pre-Fonda form-fit leotard was a darker blue. A gold button secured his short cape, another legacy from The Three Musketeers, and his belt buckle featured the letter S. SR's face was more bunny than hare [The two are synonymous in the public mind, but very different in nature. Rabbits burrow and live in warrens underground, while hares live in forms above ground. Hares leap at amazing speeds, the fastest listed at over 45 miles an hour in Guinness. The rabbits in comic stories and cartoons are all hares and Bugs is, en effet, not a bunny at all.]. The colorist usually made SR pink which was always curious to me, because pink was associated with little girls and when I was a kid no little girls read comic books like SR. My sister read Little Lulu once in awhile, but showed little interest in anything Super.

Super Rabbit. 50 years old in 1993. No reprints. No anthologies. No commemorative articles.

Outside of **COMIX WAVE**, that is.

--CLAY GEERDES

Joe Bob Briggs reviews **TRADER HORNEE** in the latest **WE ARE THE WEIRD**. $3 from POB 2002, Dallas, TX 75221. It's always fun to read a guy who is not afraid of political incorrectness. Texas is a world apart. I can't even rent any of the videos JB talks about. The stores don't carry them. I notice they have all the femme flasher stuff though.

KID ETERNITY

I loved Kid Eternity in the forties. He was the lead in **HIT COMICS** [origin in #25, last story in #60] and appeared in his own title for 18 issues [1946-49]. The idea was inspired by the movie **HERE COMES MR. JORDAN** [1941, remade as **HEAVEN CAN WAIT** [1978]]. Watched over by the Keeper, Kid Eternity helps people who are in trouble. The snapper always takes place when the Kid gets in a tight spot and calls in a famous character from history to help him out. He does this by calling out *Eternity* the way Billy Batson yells *Shazam!* Magic words were hip in the forties. Grant Morrison wrote a three issue mini-series reviving the character in 1991 and he's back as of May, 1993. I wish I could say something good about this revival, but I can't. The art is xerox hack and the story sucks. The Kid's character has been destroyed in order to fit him into DC's comix noir Vertigo line and the people who perpetrated this graphic dung should have their eyelids taped open and be forced to watch a nonstop marathon of Satanic ritual slasher films. The original stories were beautifully drawn and when I reread a couple last night they held up quite well. In the 1993 version, a girl tears off her skin and eats it. Ah, Well, what do I know? Maybe the grungies are into cannibalism and think this is primo comic book fare, but I have yet to see much good come of restyling and rescripting the golden age comic heroes.

Grant Morrison's **SEBASTIAN O** is off to a good start, though the art appears rather stiff and traced. I don't know. I just have an aversion to looking at obvious tracing. It certainly isn't art. Sebastian is a psycho who escapes to get revenge on those who put him in Bedlam. Not the freshest theme around, but Morrison writes a good story and he has my interest thusfar.

BUNNYCIDE IN CALIFORNIA

And, yes, alas, it's sad, but true. The Easter Bunny is no longer with us. He was run over by Dan O'Neill in a comic strip printed locally in the **BAY GUARDIAN** on April 14, 1993. O'Neill disposed of the body so it would not be found and he has yet to be brought to justice for this heinous crime.

MAMMOGRAMS ON PARADE

Interesting that **Vanity Fair**, a magazine that tries to link itself with all things erotic and expensive, would print a picture of an anxious Sharon Stone examining her breasts for lumps [April cover]. Wild thing? Hardly. Cancer thing? We won't know until the biopsy returns. As one who has a friend recently diagnosed with breast cancer, that cover of **Vanity Fair** provoked anxiety in me and not a trace of lust for the useless products sandwiched between **VF**'s perfumed pages. I subscribed to **VF** last year after seeing a few interesting socio-political articles therein. From the child pornography of Madonna to the geriatric sex of Liz Taylor--this generation will be saying *I'll always remember her the way she looked offering me a condom on the cover of Vanity Fair*--to Sharon Stone checking for lumps, it has not been the best experience. Shock images may get attention, but I doubt that they sell products and a cover that has all the glamour of an emergency visit to the gynecologist is not likely to add any digits to the bank accounts of people who get off having their names on underwear.

Pat Moriarity's **BIG MOUTH 2** has stories by Peter Bagge, Bob Crabb, Kim Deitch, and a number of others, most of them drawn by Moriarity who has a nice free-form cartooning style. I laughed at most of the stories in this one.

while I enjoyed the strips by Richard Sala, Spain, Mary Fleener and others printed in **BLAB! 7**, I was a wee bit disappointed that the issue contained no interviews or commentary. **BLAB!** was a good source of writing about comics and I hope future issues continue in the magazine's original historical direction.

The artwork in **SPAWN** reminds me of Aubrey Beardsley and Alex Niño.

It fluctuates between spectacular and ornate to downright dreadful. The costumes are completely ridiculous and nonfunctional, particularly those worn by the women characters. Here's Angela, a woman character, wearing armor on her lower legs and over her breasts while her thighs and stomach are bare. How absurd can you get? Here's a shot of her naked ass in the air as she dives into what appears to be a pool of blood. Design transcends reality in this clubfooted Medieval fantasy which moves from past to present. Fact is, Angela couldn't even move with all that weight on her lower legs and she's clearly designed as a sexual tease for adolescent boys who prefer image to substance. There is a lot of artistic laziness in **SPAWN**. A few of the panels are dramatic splashes, overly embellished, while others are quickly done and left uncorrected. Angela has wings on her ears in a splash then there are several panels where she has only one wing. After all the praise I heard about McFarland's work, I expected a lot more attention to detail. I found his panel continuity very poor and no balance at all between art and story. Since McFarland is wealthy and making big bucks for his company, it is no surprise to me that his editors are afraid to confront him on what he would be likely to dismiss as the minor aspects of sequential art.

Terry Laban's third **CUD** is as funny as the first two. Bob Cud has to be the most unlikely performance artist to ever take up the trade. Laban takes on Frankie and Annette in a parody of the beach movies of the sixties. Mickey Pimple, Teen Adventurer pokes more than a little fun at the Young Indiana Jones series of George Lucas.

Unpublicity Stunts: Goodbye to Vic Morrow, Brandon Lee, and...

"It wasn't long before the grim statistics revealed just how hazardous these stunts were. In 1922 a double for Pearl White in *The Perils of Pauline* misjudged a jump from a bus and came crashing to his death. During the filming of the chariot race in the silent version of *Ben-Hur*, one of the chariots lost a wheel and the driver was catapulted thirty feet into the air; he died later of internal injuries. In the years from 1925-1930, according to John Baxter's book **STUNT**, 10, 794 people were injured in California film production. Fifty-five people, most of them stunt men or women, died. In 1929 alone, 16 people were killed on movie sets. The aerial stunts that became the rage in the late 1920's claimed a significant number of lives. Three stunt pilots died during the making of Howard Hughes's *Hells Angels*. And in 1930, while filming *Such Men Are Dangerous*, a melodrama starring Warner Baxter, two small planes collided and 10 crew members perished, including the director, Kenneth Hawks, the brother of Howard Hawks. As the years passed, death and serious injury continued to be an assumed risk among Hollywood stunt men. In 1963 stunt man Bob Morgan, the husband of actress Yvonne De Carlo, lost a leg and several vertebrae when he was crushed by a railroad car while filming *How the West Was Won*. Two years later Jimmy Stewart's stunt double was killed while staging a crash-landing in *The Flight of the Phoenix*. Clint Eastwood's double lost his footing and slid to his death in One of the mountain-climbing scenes in *The Eiger Sanction*. And stunt woman Heidi Von Beltz won a four-million-dollar lawsuit when she was paralyzed from the neck down during a poorly planned crash and pileup scene in *The Cannonball Run*.

-Stephen Farber and Marc Green
OUTRAGEOUS CONDUCT: ART, EGO, AND THE TWILIGHT ZONE CASE.
New York: Arbor House, 1988.

Hey, guys, if you're going to draw and publish a comic book about someone living, you have to negotiate with that person for the rights. You can't just sit down and draw the comic book and publish it. Get real. This is capitalist America here. In April, 49ers quarterback Joe Montana filed a million dollar lawsuit against Revolutionary Comics and Personality Comics for publishing an unauthorized biography which included himself and his wife. If you do any unauthorized biography, written or drawn, you should expect to hear from your subject, but the law is funny. Using drawings of a person infringes upon their rights and you have to pay. Words about other people are okay. Frank Sinatra sued Kitty Kelley to try to stop her biography of him a few years back, but Frank lost. Revolutionary Comics publisher Todd Loren told New Kids on the Block they were infringing on his First Amendment rights by demanding royalties on a comic book bio of the group. Will Montana get this million to add to his other millions? Who knows what the judge will decide. Personally, I think Joe should have been consulted.

-C.G.